

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SHJM 4034

As Passed House:

February 6, 1996

Brief Description: Requesting a change of boundaries at Hanford.

Sponsors: House Committee on Agriculture & Ecology (originally sponsored by Representatives Mulliken, Chandler, Koster, Cairnes, Beeksma, Thompson, Buck, Elliot, Pelesky, McMahan, Schoesler, Honeyford, Goldsmith, Delvin, Hargrove, D. Schmidt, McMorris, D. Sommers, Mastin, Crouse, Skinner, Hankins and Silver).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Agriculture & Ecology: 1/29/96, 2/1/96 [DPS].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/6/96, 95-1.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & ECOLOGY

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 16 members: Representatives Chandler, Chairman; Koster, Vice Chairman; Chappell, Ranking Minority Member; Linville, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Boldt; Clements; Delvin; R. Fisher; Honeyford; Johnson; Murray; Ogden; Regala; Robertson; Rust and Schoesler.

Staff: Rick Anderson (786-7114).

Background: Land acquisition by the federal government for the Hanford Reservation was authorized in February 1943. The Wahluke Slope Control Zone, an area north of the Columbia River, was established on November 15, 1943.

The federal Department of Energy is in the process of decommissioning its reactors at the Hanford Reservation. As the department goes through this process, it will make decisions on how to remove portions of its lands from Department of Energy control. The Wahluke Slope Control Zone is currently managed as a wildlife area. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service manages one portion of these lands, and the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife manages the remainder of these lands.

Summary of Bill: The memorial makes findings relating to the history of the Wahluke Slope as an area that was settled and farmed prior to its acquisition by the

federal government; the change in federal land use priorities as a result of the decommissioning of the Department of Energy's nuclear reactors; the advantages to returning portions of the Wahluke Slope to agricultural purposes; and the need to protect wildlife and recreational areas, including the White Bluffs along the Columbia River.

The memorial requests that the area north of the Columbia River under the custody of the Department of Energy be returned to the counties of Grant, Franklin, and Adams to be used for agricultural, wildlife, and recreational purposes.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: This land was settled by private citizens before the land was acquired by the federal government for the Hanford Reservation. The land should be returned to local governments so that the land can be returned to private use while still protecting wildlife areas and sensitive areas.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: None.